



Title: Empowering oneself to step into our zone of courage

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INTRODUCTION

We are creatures of habit. We repeat behavior, even if it is dysfunctional and hinders us in achieving our dreams. Otto Scharmer developed Theory U (2017) to describe how this works. His important message: to change we have to cross a threshold., which allows us to step into the future by letting go of the past. In order to empower ourselves we have to be willing to give up beliefs and values, decision-making and habits that keep us in the same place and accept the uncertainty that comes with it. It is then that we can start dreaming and letting come new things which will help us in achieving our goals.

Personal empowerment means taking control over your life. It is about more than just *feeling* able to do so, though this is an important element. True personal empowerment requires you to set meaningful goals to identify what you want from life, and then take action to achieve those goals and have more impact over the world around you.

People who are not empowered tend to lack control over what they do. They often lack confidence in themselves and their decisions, and therefore rely on others. However, these patterns of behavior can be changed and broken by increasing self-awareness and stepping into your zone of courage.

It all starts with developing self-awareness:

- You need to develop your self-awareness, so that you understand your strengths and weaknesses.
- You also need an awareness and understanding of your goals—and how these differ from your current position.
- Achieving your goals may require you to change your behaviors, and even your deeper values and beliefs.

AIM:

Participants will learn how they can develop self-awareness as a first stepping stone to empowerment. We will introduce the concept of the Tree of Life as a means to embark on an inner journey of self-discovery to align yourself with your purpose and mission.

They will learn about the 6 steps of empowerment and how to step from their comfort zone into their zone of courage.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Participants will receive the Exercise of the Tree of Life to work with and a power point presentation with the 6 steps that are part of the process of empowerment.

CONCLUSIONS:

Empowerment starts with self-awareness. Then one has to define goals and take actions. It also involves a process of individual growth and change. We have to let go of patterns that hinder us in realizing our dreams and living our purpose in life.

KEYWORDS: self-awareness, empowerment, individual change

BIOGRAPHY:

Saskia Harkema grew up in South America (Brazil, Argentina and Colombia) and this has had a great influence on her development and choices in life. Her working career shows her multifaceted talents and skills. With a degree in Sociology she started my career as a consultant and later international project manager Europe at Philips Lighting. Where she acquired hands-on and academic experience in the broad field of marketing and project management. Even later she received a degree in Business Administration from the University of Bradford and made a switch to academia and education. In 2004 she finished her PhD at the University of Nyenrode in The Netherlands. In the course of the years she has become an expert in innovation and entrepreneurship with both hands-on and academic experience. She have developed several groundbreaking innovative programs for which she received funds from the EU, developed and managed 4-year European projects and carried out longitudinal research in different sectors (ICT, Services, Manufacturing, Construction, Legal Services, Food & Flowers) which have resulted in a large number of publications. Since a couple of years part of her efforts are geared at supporting refugees to find their way in society and materialize their dreams. She is also a human rights defender and for that purpose set up Foundation Faces of Change in 2010, which targets refugees, disenfranchised and marginalized groups with programs geared at participation and social entrepreneurship. She is global ambassador Female Wave of Change, and World Peace Ambassador The Netherlands for World Peace Tracts. Her passion is writing and she has authored 3 books of which the most recent one has been launched in June 2021. It is about her work on peacebuilding for which she developed a model with a mission to create an Economy of Peace.

